

What Are the Implications of Pension Portability?

by **George F. McClure**, Chairman
Career Activities Council

Last year pension portability bills were introduced into both houses of Congress. They were supported by IEEE and other groups of mobile professionals, such as other engineers and nurses, as well as women who interrupt careers to start families. Key provisions of these bills were shorter vesting periods and ways to reduce the ravages of inflation on future pension benefits when workers change jobs. While no pension portability bills were enacted into law, supporting testimony was heard, and new bills are being readied for introduction into the 103rd Congress.

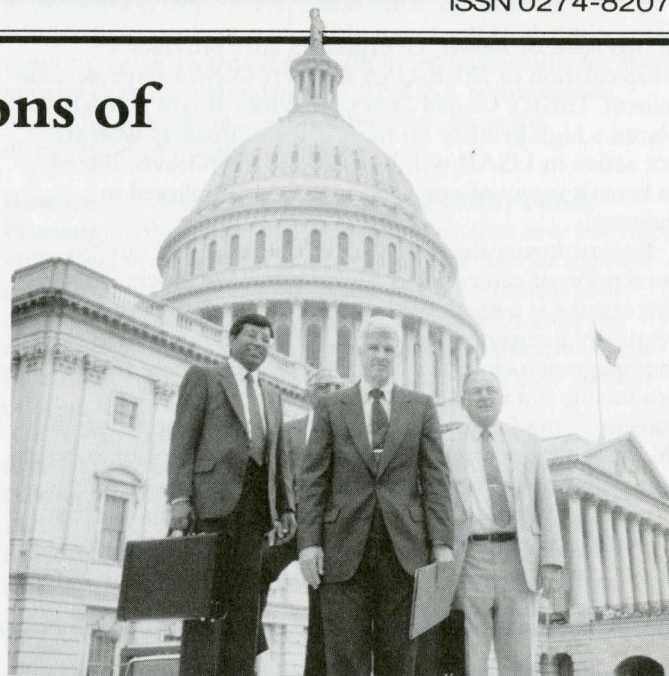
Defined contribution and defined benefit are the two types of pension plans. In defined contribution plans, the dollar amount of the contribution is fixed, and the assets available to pay out on pensions depend on the investment performance of the plan's funds. Defined contribution plans are inherently portable; the funds in the account are assigned to the plan holders and are under their control.

The popular 401(k) plan is an example of a defined contribution plan. The amount of funds available at retirement depends on the investment growth achieved before retirement, with no guarantees. By definition, defined contribution pension plans are fully funded.

Pension portability is a welcome addition to defined benefit pension plans, where the promised pension payout is fixed. The benefit payable is a function of length of service and final average pay (usually computed over the last five years of employment). The amount of money the employer must pay into the pension fund depends on employee turnover, present and future pension obligations, and the investment performance of the pension fund. More than 40 million U.S. employees are currently in 85,000 different defined benefit pension plans.

For workers who remain at one company for an entire career, the defined benefit pension plan is excellent. The employer promises a pension in an amount keyed to the salary level before retirement. This method offsets the effects of inflation over the length of the career.

For the employee who changes jobs several times and vests in multiple pension plans, the defined benefit plan has not been as favorable. Typically, the worker must



George F. McClure (c.) served as chairman of IEEE-USA's Pensions Committee from 1990 to 1992. Committee members visited Capitol Hill frequently, lobbying for pension portability bills.

reach retirement age before drawing any funds from the plan. By that time, a pension earned 20 or 30 years earlier may have suffered a significant loss in purchasing power, if no opportunity for investment growth were taken in the interim.

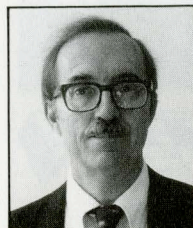
As an example, consider the engineer who leaves a company at age 45 with a pension entitlement of \$1,000 monthly for life after reaching age 65. Assuming an interest rate of seven percent, it will take \$128,983 at age 65 to provide this benefit. In 20 years, the purchasing power of \$1,000 monthly will be noticeably less than it is today.

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IMPACT

On Pension Reform

In this issue of *Impact*, George McClure provides a recapitulation of IEEE-USA's efforts to encourage pension reform. IEEE's United States Activities Board (USAB) has placed a high priority on these efforts. Readers who are not active in USAB will learn about an endeavor intended to benefit many of our U.S. members employed in industry.

Events during the past decade have changed our perception of career paths for electrical engineers. In part, this change is a result of the rapid shift away from vertically integrated structures. U.S. firms now are moving much closer to Japanese models, where firms producing end items for industrial, commercial, or consumer markets rely on a broad array of suppliers. Will this type of industrial structure provide stable employment and adequate pensions for U.S. engineers? Only more experience with such structures can answer this question.

Beyond these changes, a more basic issue about pension reform remains. Engineers regard themselves as

professionals. Is it proper to expect their employers to bear the entire cost of retirement plans? For example, faculty members in virtually all private and many public universities who participate in the TIAA/CREF system make defined contributions into a fully portable retirement system. The employer also makes a contribution. The faculty member may change jobs, but the contributions will be made into the same retirement fund.

If electrical engineers seek both professional recognition and economic independence while changing jobs frequently, IEEE should consider providing a pension structure through which IEEE's U.S. members can make defined contributions into their own retirement system. Such an approach would provide a valuable service to many of our members who change jobs frequently, act as consultants, or own small businesses.

—Robert T. Nash
Editor in Chief

The newsletter for IEEE-USA's Professional Activities Committees for Engineers

IMPACT is designed to enhance communication among leaders of the Professional Activities Committees for Engineers (PACE) throughout the United States and among the leaderships of PACE, the United States Activities Board, and IEEE. As a medium for both opinions and news, the editorial objectives of IMPACT are to inform its readers in a timely and objective manner of newsworthy activities relative to IEEE's professional purposes; to comment on institutional professional matters, such as the actions of IEEE committees and boards; to serve as a forum for debate on professional matters of concern to PACE through publishing submitted articles, invited editorials, and letters to the editor; to provide news of USAB personalities, appointments, and awards; and to encourage member interest in professional activities.

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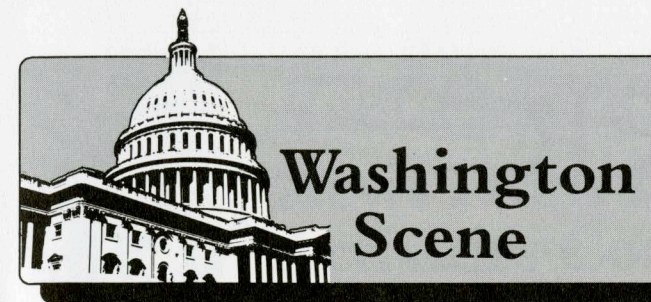
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IEEE-USA Calls for Policy Changes to Boost Technology Commercialization

In a recently approved position statement, **Regaining Strength in Technology Commercialization**, IEEE-USA recommended that the Department of Commerce (DOC) be strengthened to provide coordinated support for technological competitiveness encompassing all elements of engineering research and development. IEEE-USA also called for increased funding of the Advanced Technology Program within the DOC's Technology Administration (TA) and advised that TA be designated as the Federal Government's lead agency for coordinating support of technology commercialization ventures.

Federal Government policies and programs are needed that support and facilitate engineering R&D directed toward the efficient production of innovative civilian products and services, according to the statement. IEEE-USA also recommended that DOC encourage and facilitate U.S. industry investment in long-range strategic R&D and high-quality manufacturing; maximize use of technology resources in U.S. Government laboratories and research universities; and strengthen the U.S. technology infrastructure.

USAB Chairman Promotes U.S. Competitiveness

USAB Chairman Charles K. Alexander recently wrote a letter to the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) endorsing DOC's investigation into the national security implications of U.S. dependence on foreign imports of integrated circuit (semiconductors) ceramic packages. The investigation is being conducted in accordance with Section 232 of the **Trade Expansion Act of 1962**.

Alexander urged efforts to promote the competitiveness of the U.S. ceramic packaging industry. "Ceramic packaged semiconductors are incorporated in almost every U.S. defense system employing modern electronics and play a critical role in ensuring our national security," he said. Further, Alexander expressed IEEE-USA's belief that national security in the technological age requires the maintenance of strong, competitive domestic capabilities to meet U.S. defense needs in the event foreign supplies are disrupted.

Tort Reform Needed to Help Boost U.S. Economy

Citing critical insurance problems, frivolous lawsuits, and excessive jury awards, IEEE-USA is urging Federal and state lawmakers to enact significant tort reform legislation. In a recently approved position statement, IEEE-USA said that if such legislation is not enacted, the entire economy of our nation will be affected.

Engineers are seriously affected by these concerns, especially those in private practice, due to excessive costs and inability to obtain adequate liability insurance. These problems are threatening to reduce engineers' ability to

provide services needed to help sustain the nation's economic growth. Not only are insurance premiums increasing significantly each year, but also such important services as the cleanup of hazardous waste and the removal of asbestos are being excluded from any coverage.

IEEE-USA believes that our nation's legal system should provide prompt, just, and full compensation to injured victims at a reasonable cost. In order to have such a legal system, IEEE-USA recommends eliminating joint and several liability, so that defendants pay damages only in proportion to their responsibilities. In addition, comparative negligence should be revised, so that plaintiffs cannot receive awards if they are more responsible for their injuries than the defendants. IEEE-USA recommends returning to a rational—not arbitrary—basis for distribution of punitive damages.

Beware . . . New Tax Rules Affect 401(k) Funds

Planning a job change in 1993? Be aware that new tax rules will affect your 401(k) funds distribution. Under the new rules, if you change jobs or retire and take a lump sum distribution, instead of leaving the funds with your old employer or doing a trustee-to-trustee transfer into a new Individual Retirement Account or new 401(k), 20 percent of your funds will be withheld.

Why the new rule? The Government's official word is that the new taxes collected will be used to extend jobless benefits and that discouraging spending will ensure that an individual's pension is protected. The unofficial word is that this rule may be an easy way to raise taxes. Many people will not even be aware of the rule change. If job changes are involuntary, workers may overlook the new rule while trying to deal with lay-offs or forced retirements. The rule could lead to more people losing pensions instead of saving them.

Many employers are establishing procedures to handle trustee-to-trustee transfers. If you are changing jobs or retiring, consult a financial adviser about the best way to handle your 401(k) funds.

IEEE-USA Names 1993 Congressional Fellows

The United States Activities Board recently approved recommendations for two 1993 Congressional Fellowships. LeEarl Bryant of Richardson, Texas, and Lawrence E. Larsen of Silver Spring, Maryland, began their Fellowships on January 1 and will work in selected staff assignments on Capitol Hill for one year.

A consultant to toll authorities and advanced technology companies in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area, Ms. Bryant holds a master's degree in electrical engineering with a biomedical option from Southern Methodist University and the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School. She has selected an assignment on the staff of Rep. Pete Geren (D-Texas). Ms. Bryant will be working on science, space, and technology issues.

A physician and engineer, Dr. Larsen is a *magna cum laude* graduate of the University of Colorado School of Medicine at Denver. He later served with the U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command, where he founded the first U.S. laboratory for millimeter wave biophysics at Walter Reed Army Institute of Research. Dr. Larsen has selected an assignment on the staff of Senator William V. Roth (R-Delaware) and will be working on engineering health care issues.

—G. C. Stelluto, G. Aukland

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News From the Regions



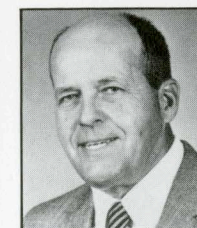
by Carl K. Kintzel, Chair
PACE Information Committee

Impact continues reporting local professional activities conducted or planned by PACE leaders. We hope you will talk with the person responsible for the specific activity, in order to learn more about it.

Please refer to your IEEE-USA Directory to contact any of the people listed for information. We would appreciate any reader response or comments on this presentation of Regional and Divisional activities.

IEEE UNIT	ACTIVITY	CONTACT	IEEE UNIT	ACTIVITY	CONTACT
Location	Activity	Contact	Location	Activity	Contact
Lexington	Held Career Conflicts Workshop; planned Careers Phase II Workshop; addressed professional issues at monthly Section meetings; supported NEW; provided student-to-career-person counseling service for engineering students.	Don Hill, 606/257-8487		social events for Section members and students and IEEE video conferences; published articles on professional activities in Section newsletter; participated in engineering nights at local baseball and basketball games.	
Memphis	Participated in NEW activities; active in Memphis Joint Engineers Council; assisted Memphis/Shelby County Science Fair; obtained used equipment from industry for high schools; published monthly PACE articles in Section newsletter.	Philip K. Lim, 901/528-4292	Chicago	Held job assistance workshop and careers fairs; participated in NEW activities; provided judges for Science Fair; through SILA, worked with other engineers to pass legislative bills of concern to engineering profession.	John Waters, 708/329-2733
New Orleans	Supported S-PAC at Tulane University; participated in NEW activities; published PACE news on retirement and pensions in Section newsletter; trained a facilitator for Career Transitions workshops.	Donald A. Preston, 504/466-4235	Iowa-Illinois	Used IEEE-USA's Employment Guide for Engineers and Scientists in Section meeting; published articles on professional activities in Section newsletter; participated in NEW activities; provided funding for MathCounts contests and science fairs; planned Careers Phase II Workshop; co-sponsored P.E. review course with the National Society of Professional Engineers.	Martin D. Hohl, 309/793-3740
Orlando	Held Section meeting on "Combating Obsolescence: A Guide to Survival"; initiated publication of suggestions for unemployed engineers in Section newsletter; initiated publication of Section membership list by employer; judged International Science and Engineering Fair.	Glenn Portz, 407/644-2408	Milwaukee	Provided referrals for unemployed IEEE engineers and engineering consultants; made presentations at Section meetings on professional topics; participated in NEW activities; held Student Night; provided speakers and mentors for local schools, judges for local Science Fair, and awards for winners in the electrical engineering category; provided volunteers for summer program for students supported by local firms; with local universities, sponsored IEEE video conferences.	Rod Elger, 414/274-4236
Region 4 Cedar Rapids	Conducted two Careers Phase II Workshops; provided two scholarships for electrical engineering students at two universities; supported an S-PAC at Iowa State University in Ames; provided judges, awards, and funding for the Eastern Iowa Science Fair; led efforts to establish a Challenger Learning Center in the State of Iowa; supported joint engineering society Career Guidance Conference for high school seniors; sponsored three	Donald H. Meyer, 319/364-7901			

—To be continued in future issues with programs in other Regions.



IMPACT

News From IEEE-USA's Member Activities Council

by John E. Martin, Editor
Member Activities Council

Because many readers find these Council reports informative, each issue of Impact will feature news from one of the four non-PACE Councils. These reports will provide readers with semi-annual roundups of activities and a better look at the progress taking place in IEEE-USA committees. In this issue of Impact, MAC Editor John E. Martin reports on the activities of IEEE-USA's Member Activities Council.

Salary Survey Committee

Chairman Roy Harris and committee members have overseen the preparation and distribution of approximately 21,000 salary survey questionnaires to U.S. members and have been receiving responses at a normal rate. The survey should shed new light on the engineering employment situation, including information on salaries and income by such cross tabulations as industry, primary area of expertise, geographic area, and education.

The Committee expects to publish the 1993 U.S. Membership Salary and Fringe Benefit Survey this spring. Before May 15, the discounted price for members is \$64.95, plus tax and shipping. The list price is \$99.95. After May 15, the price will be \$74.95 for members and \$119.95 for non-members. Call (800) 678-IEEE, ask for Publication Sales, and be sure to request UH0194-1 when ordering the Survey.

Awards and Recognition Committee

The Committee, chaired by Sherry L. Ramsey, sent letters to all U.S. Section, Council, Area, and Awards Chairmen and local PACE leaders soliciting nominations for 1993 USAB awards. Letters requesting nominations for the Harry Diamond Memorial Award were sent to Federal laboratories and facilities directors. The media also received correspondence from the Committee about USAB's literary awards. The deadline for all nominations is March 31. Please consider nominating a worthy individual for a USAB award.

Opinion Survey Committee

Under Chairman Gerald W. Gordon, the 1993 Opinion Survey Committee has been established to conduct another of these periodic surveys of members. A timetable for the survey has been determined, and the Committee is about to begin selecting a contractor to develop, tabulate, and analyze the survey. Chairman Gordon is asking USAB members to send him topics for possible inclusion.

Employment Assistance Committee

As Employment Assistance Committee Chairman, I along with IEEE-USA staff met recently with the PEER II contractor, Success Systems, to resolve problems that have surfaced in the first year of PEER II operation.

Committee member Alan B. Showalter conducted a successful Employment Assistance Workshop for IEEE's Rochester Section. In addition, he will present a paper on IEEE-USA employment assistance efforts at the upcoming National Aerospace & Electronics Conference as part of the conference session, "The Impact of Defense Budget Restructuring on Engineering Employment."

Contract discussions are under way between job fair operators—The Lendman Group, the Professional Exchange, and WESTECH—and Sections and Councils for cosponsored job fairs in 1993. A tentative calendar is included in this issue of Impact.

The senior edition of the *Employment Guide for Engineers and Scientists* is still being distributed free, along with a packet of additional information, to unemployed non-student members who request it in writing from the IEEE-USA Office in Washington, D.C.

Private Practitioners Task Force (PPTF)

Chairman Irwin Weitman and PPTF members are developing a newsletter for self-employed IEEE members. The newsletter is a response to a questionnaire in *The Institute* about PPTF and consultants' networks. The Task Force continues to consider future directions after its two-year mandate from USAB is completed in 1993.

Communications Committee, Impact Editorial Board, and Professional Perspective Editorial Board

The first series of meetings of the three communications-oriented groups took place in February, in Washington, D.C. The Communications Committee, chaired by Daniel Rosich, plans to continue implementing the Communications Plan, which includes developing a marketing effort for IEEE-USA publications. Eight issues of *Impact*, with Robert T. Nash serving as Editor in Chief, are planned for 1993. Four issues of *Professional Perspective* will be published in 1993, with two issues appearing as inserts in *The Institute* and two issues appearing in *Spectrum*. Michael J. Whitelaw is Editor in Chief.

Precollege Education Committee

Chaired by Michael R. Andrews, the Committee's shell presentation on the engineering profession is nearly completed. Slides have been assembled, and the script is being finalized. ♦

Economic Disarray Affects Rivers' Engineering Model

by **Frank E. Lord**, Editor
Career Activities Council

This forecast is the tenth in a series of quarterly engineering employment forecasts produced by Robert A. Rivers. Each quarter, he refigures projections for the next seven quarters. Rivers reports that the economy is in such disarray that his previously successful model is still not producing meaningful projections.

Rivers' model has been based on three major factors—the general state of the economy, exports, and defense spending. Taken together, these factors exert the most influence engineering unemployment seven quarters into the future.

Projections now extend only three quarters instead of seven. Rivers intends to continue analyzing and commenting on engineering unemployment, even if he can present only the actual figure for the most recent quarter. If and when the economy stabilizes, Rivers may be able to derive longer projections from his model once again.

While the Clinton Administration ponders what actions to take to stimulate the economy, engineers wonder how such actions will affect them. Since exports are a factor, moves to improve U.S. competitiveness should favorably influence engineering employment.

Long-term activities that improve industrial productivity would also create a greater demand for engineers. Rivers points to the economic conference Clinton held in Little

Rock, Arkansas, after the Presidential election. One participant noted that a stimulus to small business of approximately \$86 billion would result from bank regulators backing off from their present overzealousness.

Rivers has also observed that the new Administration is talking in terms of the next yearly defense budget cut being as high as 20 percent. Some of the funds made available from such a cut could be directed to improving the country's transportation and communications infrastructure, another possible plus for engineering employment. ♦

Rivers' Engineering Unemployment Forecast			
		Engineering Unemployment Percent	
Year	Quarter	Forecast	Actual*
1989	4	1.49	1.3
	1	1.48	2.0
	2	1.53	2.1
	3	1.84	1.9
1990	4	2.18	2.2
	1	2.22	2.6
	2	2.23	2.4
	3	2.20	2.1
1991	4	2.08	2.5
	1	2.21	4.2
	2	2.12	3.9
	3	2.06	3.6
1992	4	1.67	3.9
	1	1.51	
	2	1.45	
	3	1.26	

*from Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data

NOTE: Transition engineering unemployment rate at times of full engineering employment = 0.3 to 0.4 percent

PENSIONS—continued

Pension portability would allow engineers to receive the present values of their pensions to invest now, allowing for growth by age 65. The portability mechanism would work by computing the present value for the value of the pension at age 65, using a historical real interest rate of three percent. Three percent represents the cost of money without an inflation component. Since the rate is discounted, a smaller number is better for the recipient.

In the example, the present value of \$128,983 is \$71,414. The terminating engineer would receive this amount. He or she could then put this sum into an Individual Retirement Arrangement or into the pension fund of the next employer, if that option were offered.

Note that this total represents 55 percent of the amount due in 20 years. If the discount rate were seven percent rather than three percent, the amount received would be 26 percent of the future value. When the engineer reaches 65 years of age in 20 years, the value would be \$276,350, if the \$71,414 were invested in a tax-deferred account at seven percent.

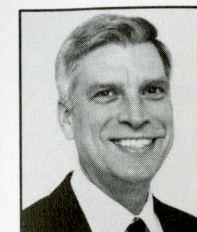
With 20 years to go before retirement, our engineer may decide to place the pension's proceeds in a stock investment similar to Standard & Poor's 500, which has historically grown at 10 percent per year. That investment could allow the fund to grow to \$480,438 by retirement age. The monthly payment starting at age 65 would then be \$3,725,

if annuitized at seven percent; or \$4,636, if the balance were left in a 10 percent stock fund and shares were cashed in monthly. In either case, purchasing power is considerably improved over simply waiting to draw the \$1,000 per month from the former employer's defined benefit plan.

Another pension portability advantage is the removal of liability from the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC). This government agency was established under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, to ensure that employees entitled to defined benefit pensions received them, even if the company promising the pension became financially weak or bankrupt.

To achieve this goal, each employer was charged an annual premium to build a fund that would provide for payment of most of the pension entitlement as a last resort. The premium, initially \$1 per covered employee per year, has grown to as much as \$72 per person. Fear remains that increases in insurance premiums could drive out the least risky, better funded plans. Many small employers have already terminated their pension plans, in part because of PBGC's added premium costs.

Portable pensions are necessary to cope with today's changing economy. Employees probably will be unable to stay with one company throughout their careers. While Social Security has never been considered a substitute—only a supplement—for a pension plan, that trust fund will probably run out by the year 2030. Employees must make their own plans for funding their retirements. The time for portable pensions has arrived. ♦



IEEE United States Activities Board

USAB Chairman's Message

In the previous issue of *Impact*, I mentioned that communications is our weakest link in helping our members. In fact, most engineers could benefit from improving their communication skills. An important part of our communication is the reading you are now doing, because even if we do the best job possible of writing, our efforts are in vain if people don't read. My biggest emphasis this year will be on trying to improve USAB's ability to communicate, not only with you, the leaders, but with all members and with one another.

A key element of almost every presentation I give places emphasis on communications. When I was a college student, I really wasn't concerned about how well I wrote or spoke. I have joked that my English skills were so bad in college that my Ph.D. Committee seriously considered allowing me to use English to satisfy my foreign language requirement. But I learned that good communication skills are a necessary part of being a good engineer. I believe that a successful engineering career is directly proportional to one's ability to communicate—a message I give to all of my students.

Engineers spend approximately 80 percent of their time communicating and only about 15 percent doing engineering. I think that engineers communicate better than individuals in other professions. We have to—we are always working together in groups. People's lives depend on what we do. However, I feel we still have room for improvement.

For example, IEEE does a great deal for its members. IEEE-USA is aggressively promoting portable pension legislation. We asked for your support last year and will need it again this year. I wonder how many of our members know about these efforts, even though we have tried several ways of communicating with them about this issue.

Continuing education programs are another example. IEEE has several continuing education programs, yet very few people take advantage of them. One of the best insurance policies that you can take out for yourself to help avoid obsolescence is refining and strengthening your skills. How can we get our members interested in continuing education?

I've been studying communication skills for 20 years. A stubborn problem in terms of reaching a solution is how to get engineers to read or listen to important career messages. Please write to me in care of the IEEE-USA Office, if you have any ideas or recommendations.

I will be examining all aspects of communications within IEEE-USA. Hopefully, you will see some improvements in how we communicate with you and help you to communicate with other members. Again, any suggestions from you will be appreciated.

—Charles K. Alexander

Job Fairs Update

IEEE cosponsored job fairs are planned (although not all contracts have been finalized) in these locations in 1993.

DATE	LOCATION
March 8-9	Nat'l Capital Area Council (LG)
March 22-23	Boston Section (LG)
March 29-30	Detroit Section (PE)
March 29-30	Cleveland Section (LG)
April 5-6	Chicago Section (LG)
April 19-20	Santa Clara Section (W)
April 26-27	Nat'l Capital Area Council (LG)
May 3-4	San Jose Section (LG)
May 17-18	Detroit Section (LG)
June 7-8	Boston Section (LG)
June 14-15	Detroit Section (PE)
June 14-15	Nat'l Capital Area Council (LG)
June 21-22	Dallas Section (LG)
June 21-22	Chicago Section (LG)
June 21-22	Santa Clara Section (W)
July 12-13	San Jose Section (LG)
August 2-3	Nat'l Capital Area Council (LG)
August 2-3	Detroit Section (LG)

August 16-17	Boston Section (LG)
August 16-17	Santa Clara Section (W)
September 13-14	Chicago Section (LG)
September 13-14	San Jose Section (LG)
September 20-21	Detroit Section (PE)
September 20-21	Nat'l Capital Area Council (LG)
October 11-12	Santa Clara Section (W)
October 18-19	Cleveland Section (LG)
October 18-19	Boston Section (LG)
October 18-19	Dallas Section (LG)
October 25-26	Detroit Section (LG)
November 8-9	Detroit Section (PE)
November 8-9	Nat'l Capital Area Council (LG)
November 15-16	San Jose Section (LG)
December 6-7	Chicago Section (LG)
December 6-7	Santa Clara Section (W)

Job fairs are open to all engineers. For more information concerning the locations of the job fairs marked (LG), please call (800) 562-2820; Virginia residents should call (800) 533-1827. For fairs marked (PE), call (800) 338-4530; fairs marked with (W) call (408) 970-8800. In all cases, ask for the IEEE Career Fair Coordinator. ♦



What's Your Opinion?

by **Harold S. Goldberg**, Editor
Government Activities Council

Of all of IEEE's vice presidents, the one with the most direct impact on individual members is the Vice President for Professional Activities, who is also Chairman of the United States Activities Board (USAB). Within the United States, this position may be more powerful than that of IEEE's President.

With the help of USAB's Councils, the Vice President of Professional Activities formulates IEEE professional activities policy for presentation to USAB and to IEEE's Board of Directors. He is the spokesman for IEEE's U.S. members to various government branches. The Vice President makes speeches, holds seminars, and promotes the existence and aspirations of U.S. members in all matters not specifically technical.

Yet this officer is not elected by the U.S. members. This individual, as well as the other IEEE Vice Presidents of Publications, Technical Activities, and Educational Activities, is elected by the 23 directors that constitute IEEE's Assembly. The Assembly consists of ten Regional Directors, ten Division Directors, and IEEE's President, President-elect, and immediate past President. Within this Assembly, six U.S. Regional Directors and three of the ten Division Directors, nine in all, are members of USAB. The other Assembly members may not know the candidate at all, except through mutual membership on IEEE's Board of Directors.

The Assembly elects vice presidents for one year. However, since 1978, most IEEE vice presidents have been re-elected for a second year. Since that time, all Vice Presidents for Professional Activities have been elected for a second term. In 1992, the Assembly refused the

incumbent a second term, voting instead for a retiring Regional Director as 1993 Vice President and USAB Chairman.

Of course, the Assembly members do not announce the reasons for their actions. Their justifications could range from philosophical differences to personality conflicts. Politics may play a role in rejecting a good performer and electing "one of their own"—a former Director. Perhaps none of the above apply. Their reasoning is not the issue.

The issue is that IEEE's U.S. members have never been offered the chance to decide whether candidates for this important office should continue to be chosen by a few directors or by a direct vote of the U.S. members. Like a select few people in the Assembly, the U.S. members could not possibly know all about a particular candidate for Vice President. In that sense, the Assembly could probably screen the candidates more effectively. On the other hand, politics could dominate, with the "good ol' boy" network presiding over the selection. Arguments can be made for both sides. The critical point is that neither the members nor the volunteer leaders have ever chosen a method of electing the Vice President for Professional Activities.

I submit this opinion to you, since the candidate selected for this important position directly represents IEEE's U.S. members, especially when addressing Congress and the new Administration. The decision is not simple. What are your thoughts?

Let your opinion be known after due consideration. Write letters to the editor of *Impact* about your views on this topic in care of the IEEE-USA Office in Washington, D.C. It will be interesting to find out how our U.S. members would like this issue to be determined, if given a choice. ♦

A Minute For PACE

by **Carl K. Kintzel**, Member
PACE Workshop Planning Committee

This issue of *Impact* continues "A Minute for PACE," a column presenting brief announcements and news bulletins that local PACE leaders can read at Section or Chapter meetings. Our purpose is to give higher visibility on the local level to current concerns of IEEE United States Activities and its PACE network. Here is this issue's PACE Minute.

National Engineers Week 1993 (NEW '93) is now history. Many significant events took place February 14-20, including an evening gala at Intelsat headquarters in Washington, D.C. Guests included

representatives of participating engineering societies, government agencies, Congress, corporations, students, and children. Dr. James W. Mitchell of AT&T Bell Laboratories was honored as the Black Engineer of the Year for excellence in American engineering in Baltimore, Maryland. Winners of the first Future City Competition regional programs headed to the U.S. Department of Energy for the finals.

NEW was an exciting time, especially for IEEE as the lead sponsoring society. Let's not put the memories aside, however, until all the activities have been duly reported. Send a detailed description of the activities your Section or Society conducted during NEW '93. Write to Ann Hartfiel, IEEE-USA, 1828 L Street, N.W., Suite 1202, Washington, DC 20036; or fax (202) 785-0835. ♦